

U.S. Extension Service,  
U.S. Dept. of Agr.  
Washington 25, D. C.

CENTRAL REGION

Interpreting Economic Information for State and Regional Use,

Wednesday, November 1, 1950

I. GENERAL OUTLOOK FOR THE U.S.:

1. High production
2. Record high gross farm income
3. High costs of operation
4. Net farm income approximately 15% increase above 1950.
5. Enlarged defense programs and men and materials.
6. Increased taxes.
7. Full employment at high wages.
8. Higher costs of living.
9. Increased food supply and consumption.
10. Decreased supplies of certain consumer goods using strategic military materials.

II. REGIONAL SITUATION:

In the light of these national prospects, what are the situations we face locally?

1. Financial situation -- All States in region are in better financial condition for 1950 than had been anticipated due to favorable weather, crops and prices.
2. Non-farm income -- A few, but not many areas, have opportunities for farm families to earn appreciable amounts off the farm.
3. Shortages of household equipment - showing up in some places. Some due to lack of transportation for goods in warehouses.
4. Buy now or wait? -- What should we advise people about buying equipment? We don't "think" there is going to be plenty but DON'T BUY UNLESS YOU REALLY NEED IT. Wait until you find what you really want. Don't take just anything. With the prospect of more and more women being drawn again into the labor force, purchase of labor saving equipment to increase efficiency of operation may be good management.
5. Gyp artists -- Homemakers are being beset with household rackets -- vacuum cleaners that do not meet acceptable standards, poor salesmanship for aluminum vs. steel utensils, some services that do not give them their money's worth, etc. We think we have given out information of the consumer education type, we need still more and more and more!



6. Changing community interests affecting family living.
  - a. Health -- local community clinics; physicians in rural areas formerly not served by medical profession, local contributions to build community hospitals, health units.
  - b. REA -- States receiving REA lines are seeing installation of home water systems, phone service, purchase of household equipment.
  - c. School reorganization -- bringing about need for new roads, school lunches.
  - d. Taxes -- to build the roads needed as a result of changed business and school centers - taxes on gasoline, increased licence fees.
  - e. Television -- Some evidence of effect of TV in areas having it for first time or now enlarging service (like Iowa State having its own TV station to complement its own radio station)
  - f. Cultural and Social -- More vacation travel among farm families. Increased college attendance of farm youth, especially in small junior colleges  
Community concert series  
Square dancing  
Roller skating - some areas have special rinks  
Farm families are taking on "urban ways"  
Members of numerous organized social groups.  
Gambling  
Smoking  
Liquor
  - g. Urban groups -- increasing number
  - h. Merchandising different because many business firms have modernized buildings and store fronts; better quality, better displays, selective purchasing.
7. Legislation -- Tax removed from colored margarine in some States; quality milk regulations.
8. Family relationships -- What effect with reduction in house building? What about men being called back into service - will their families "double up" with some relative, or have there been enough houses built these past few years so this isn't necessary again? Problem different this time if they have to double up, because many of these men have one or more children, whereas before they have none.
9. Social Security -- record keeping necessary. Farm labor benefits.

## III. THE FUTURE

We have comparative clear ideas about short time planning, but what about long run? Our families need help to meet three different kinds of possible situations, the effect of each being quite different in the long run -- Cold war with a long mobilization period; all out war; and negotiated peace.

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